

**No. 167. An act relating to miscellaneous judiciary procedures.**

(S.234)

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 163 is amended to read:

§ 163. JUVENILE COURT DIVERSION PROJECT

\* \* \*

(i) Notwithstanding subdivision (c)(1) of this section, the diversion program may accept cases from the Youth Substance ~~Abuse~~ Awareness Safety Program pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 656 or 18 V.S.A. § 4230b. The confidentiality provisions of this section shall become effective when a notice of violation is issued under 7 V.S.A. § 656(b) or 18 V.S.A. § 4230b(b), and shall remain in effect unless the person fails to register with or complete the Youth Substance ~~Abuse~~ Awareness Safety Program.

\* \* \*

Sec. 2. 3 V.S.A. § 164 is amended to read:

§ 164. ADULT COURT DIVERSION PROGRAM

\* \* \*

(l) Notwithstanding subdivision (e)(1) of this section, the diversion program may accept cases from the Youth Substance ~~Abuse~~ Awareness Safety Program pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 656 or 18 V.S.A. § 4230b. The confidentiality provisions of this section shall become effective when a notice of violation is issued under 7 V.S.A. § 656(b) or 18 V.S.A. § 4230b(b), and shall remain in

effect unless the person fails to register with or complete the Youth Substance ~~Abuse~~ Awareness Safety Program.

\* \* \*

Sec. 3. 18 V.S.A. § 4230a is amended to read:

§ 4230a. ~~MARIJUANA~~ CANNABIS POSSESSION BY A PERSON 21  
YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER

\* \* \*

(d) Fifty percent of the civil penalties imposed by the Judicial Bureau for violations of this section shall be deposited in the Drug Task Force Special Fund, hereby created to be managed pursuant to 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5, and available to the Department of Public Safety for the funding of law enforcement officers on the Drug Task Force, except for a \$12.50 administrative charge for each violation, which shall be deposited in the Court Technology Special Fund, in accordance with 13 V.S.A. § 7252. The remaining 50 percent shall be deposited in the Youth Substance ~~Abuse~~ Awareness Safety Program Special Fund, hereby created to be managed pursuant to 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5, and available to the Court Diversion Program for funding of the Youth Substance ~~Abuse~~ Awareness Safety Program as required by section 4230b of this title.

\* \* \*

Sec. 4. 18 V.S.A. § 4230f is amended to read:

§ 4230f. DISPENSING ~~MARIJUANA~~ CANNABIS TO A PERSON UNDER  
21 YEARS OF AGE; CRIMINAL OFFENSE

\* \* \*

(e)(1) Subsections (a)–(d) of this section shall not apply to a person under 21 years of age who dispenses ~~marijuana~~ cannabis to a person under 21 years of age or who knowingly enables the consumption of ~~marijuana~~ cannabis by a person under 21 years of age.

(2) A person who is 18, 19, or 20 years of age who knowingly dispenses ~~marijuana~~ cannabis to a person who is 18, 19, or 20 years of age commits a civil violation and shall be referred to the Court Diversion Program for the purpose of enrollment in the Youth Substance ~~Abuse~~ Awareness Safety Program in accordance with the provisions of section 4230b of this title and shall be subject to the penalties in that section for failure to complete the program successfully.

\* \* \*

Sec. 5. 7 V.S.A. § 656 is amended to read:

§ 656. PERSON 16 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER AND UNDER 21 YEARS  
OF AGE MISREPRESENTING AGE, PROCURING, POSSESSING,  
OR CONSUMING ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES; CIVIL  
VIOLATION-

(a)(1) Prohibited conduct. A person 16 years of age or older and under 21 years of age shall not:

(A) Falsely represent his or her age for the purpose of procuring or attempting to procure malt or vinous beverages, spirits, or fortified wines from any licensee, State liquor agency, or other person or persons.

(B) Possess malt or vinous beverages, spirits, or fortified wines for the purpose of consumption by himself or herself or other minors, except in the regular performance of duties as an employee of a licensee licensed to sell alcoholic liquor.

(C) Consume malt or vinous beverages, spirits, or fortified wines. A violation of this subdivision may be prosecuted in a jurisdiction where the minor has consumed malt or vinous beverages, spirits, or fortified wines or in a jurisdiction where the indicators of consumption are observed.

(2) Offense. A person ~~under 21 years of age~~ who knowingly violates subdivision (1) of this subsection commits a civil violation and shall be referred to the Court Diversion Program for the purpose of enrollment in the Youth Substance Abuse Awareness Safety Program. A person who fails to complete the program successfully shall be subject to:

(A) a civil penalty of \$300.00 and suspension of the person's operator's license and privilege to operate a motor vehicle for a period of 30 days, for a first offense; and

(B) a civil penalty of not more than \$600.00 and suspension of the person's operator's license and privilege to operate a motor vehicle for a period of 90 days, for a second or subsequent offense.

(b) Issuance of notice of violation. A law enforcement officer shall issue a person ~~under 21 years of age~~ who violates this section a notice of violation, in a form approved by the Court Administrator. The notice of violation shall require the person to provide his or her name and address and shall explain procedures under this section, including that:

\* \* \*

Sec. 6. 18 V.S.A. § 4230b is amended to read:

§ 4230b. ~~MARIJUANA~~ CANNABIS POSSESSION BY A PERSON 16 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER AND UNDER 21 YEARS OF AGE;  
CIVIL VIOLATION

(a) Offense. A person 16 years of age or older and under 21 years of age who knowingly and unlawfully possesses one ounce or less of ~~marijuana~~ cannabis or five grams or less of hashish or two mature ~~marijuana~~ cannabis plants or fewer or four immature ~~marijuana~~ cannabis plants or fewer commits a civil violation and shall be referred to the Court Diversion Program for the purpose of enrollment in the Youth Substance Abuse Safety Program. A person who fails to complete the program successfully shall be subject to:

(1) a civil penalty of \$300.00 and suspension of the person's operator's license and privilege to operate a motor vehicle for a period of 30 days, for a first offense; and

(2) a civil penalty of not more than \$600.00 and suspension of the person's operator's license and privilege to operate a motor vehicle for a period of 90 days, for a second or subsequent offense.

(b) Issuance of ~~Notice~~ notice of ~~Violation~~ violation. A law enforcement officer shall issue a person ~~under 21 years of age~~ who violates this section with a notice of violation, in a form approved by the Court Administrator. The notice of violation shall require the person to provide his or her name and address and shall explain procedures under this section, including that:

\* \* \*

(d) Registration in Youth Substance ~~Abuse~~ Awareness Safety Program. Within 15 days after receiving a notice of violation, the person shall contact the Diversion Program in the county where the offense occurred and register for the Youth Substance ~~Abuse~~ Awareness Safety Program. If the person fails to do so, the Diversion Program shall file the summons and complaint with the Judicial Bureau for adjudication under 4 V.S.A. chapter 29. The Diversion Program shall provide a copy of the summons and complaint to the law enforcement officer who issued the notice of violation and shall provide two copies to the person charged with the violation.

\* \* \*

(f)(1) ~~Diversion Program Requirements~~ requirements. Upon being contacted by a person who has been issued a notice of violation, the Diversion Program shall register the person in the Youth Substance ~~Abuse~~ Awareness Safety Program. Pursuant to the Youth Substance ~~Abuse~~ Awareness Safety Program, the Diversion Program shall impose conditions on the person. The conditions imposed shall include only conditions related to the offense and in every case shall include a condition requiring satisfactory completion of substance abuse screening using an evidence-based tool and, if deemed appropriate following the screening, substance abuse assessment and substance abuse education or substance abuse counseling, or both. If the screener recommends substance abuse counseling, the person shall choose a State-certified or State-licensed substance abuse counselor or substance abuse treatment provider to provide the services.

\* \* \*

Sec. 7. 18 V.S.A. § 4230j is added to read:

§ 4230j. CANNABIS POSSESSION BY A PERSON UNDER 16 YEARS  
OF AGE; DELINQUENCY

A person under 16 years of age who engages in conduct in violation of  
subdivision 4230b of this title commits a delinquent act and shall be subject to  
33 V.S.A. chapter 52. The person shall be provided the opportunity to  
participate in the Court Diversion Program.

Sec. 8. 23 V.S.A. § 203 is amended to read:

§ 203. COUNTERFEITING, FRAUD, AND MISUSE; PENALTY

(a) A person shall not:

\* \* \*

(2) display or cause or permit to be displayed, or have in his or her possession, any fictitious or fraudulently altered operator license, learner's permit, nondriver identification card, inspection sticker, or registration certificate, or display for any fraudulent purpose an expired or counterfeit insurance identification card or similar document;

\* \* \*

(b)(1) ~~A~~ Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, a violation of subsection (a) of this section shall be a traffic violation for which there shall be a penalty of not more than \$1,000.00. If a person is found to have committed the violation, the person's privilege to operate motor vehicles shall be suspended for 60 days.

(2) If a person may be charged with a violation of subdivision (a)(2) of this section or with a violation of 7 V.S.A. § 656, the person shall be charged with a violation of 7 V.S.A. § 656 and not with a violation of this section.

Sec. 9. 4 V.S.A. § 1105 is amended to read:

§ 1105. ANSWER TO COMPLAINT; DEFAULT

(a) A violation shall be charged upon a summons and complaint form approved and distributed by the Court Administrator. The complaint shall be



signed by the issuing officer or by the State's Attorney. The original shall be filed with the Judicial Bureau; a copy shall be retained by the issuing officer or State's Attorney and two copies shall be given to the defendant. The Judicial Bureau may, consistent with rules adopted by the Supreme Court pursuant to 12 V.S.A. § 1, accept electronic signatures on any document, including the signatures of issuing officers, State's Attorneys, and notaries public. The complaint shall include a statement of rights, instructions, notice that a defendant may ~~admit, not contest, or deny a violation~~ request a hearing or accept the penalties without a hearing, notice of the fee for failure to answer within ~~20~~ 21 days, and other notices as the Court Administrator deems appropriate. The Court Administrator, in consultation with appropriate law enforcement agencies, may approve a single form for charging all violations, or may approve two or more forms as necessary to administer the operations of the Judicial Bureau.

(b) A person who is charged with a violation shall have ~~20~~ 21 days from the date the complaint is issued to ~~admit or deny the allegations or to state that he or she does not contest the allegations in the complaint~~ request a hearing or to state that he or she will accept the penalties without a hearing. The Judicial Bureau shall assess against a defendant a fee of \$20.00 for failure to answer a complaint within the time allowed. The fee shall be assessed in the default judgment and deposited in the Court Technology Special Fund established pursuant to section 27 of this title.

(c) A person who ~~admits or does not contest the allegations~~ accepts the penalties may so indicate and sign the complaint. The Bureau shall accept the admission or statement that the allegations are not contested and accept payment of the waiver penalty.

(d) If the person sends in the amount of the waiver penalty without signing the complaint, the Bureau shall accept the payment indicating that payment was made and that the allegations were not contested.

(e) A person who denies the allegations or who wishes to have a hearing on the complaint for any other reason may so indicate and sign the complaint. Upon receipt, the Bureau shall schedule a hearing.

\* \* \*

Sec. 10. 12 V.S.A. § 2903(d) is amended to read:

(d) If a judgment lien is not satisfied within 30 days of recording, it may be foreclosed and redeemed as provided in this title and V.R.C.P. 80.1. Unless the court finds that as of the date of foreclosure the amount of the outstanding debt exceeds the value of the real property being foreclosed, ~~section 4531~~ chapter 172 of this title shall apply to foreclosure of a judgment lien.

Sec. 11. 12 V.S.A. § 5812 is amended to read:

§ 5812. OATH TO BE ADMINISTERED TO ATTORNEYS

You solemnly swear (affirm) that you will do no falsehood, nor consent that any be done in court, and if you know of any, you will give knowledge thereof to the judges of the court or some of them, that it may be reformed; that you

will not wittingly, willingly, or knowingly promote, sue, or procure to be sued, any false or unlawful suit, or give aid or consent to the same; that you will delay no ~~man~~ person for lucre or malice, but will act in the office of attorney within the court, according to your best learning and discretion, with all good fidelity as well to the court as to your client. So help you God (or, “under the pains and penalties of perjury”).

Sec. 12. 13 V.S.A. § 1029 is amended to read:

§ 1029. ALCOHOLISM, LIMITATIONS, EXCEPTIONS

(a) No political subdivision of the State may adopt or enforce a law or rule having the force of law that includes being found in an intoxicated condition as one of the elements of the offense giving rise to a criminal or civil penalty. No political subdivision may interpret or apply any law of general application to circumvent this provision.

(b) Nothing in this section affects any law or rule against operating a motor vehicle or other machinery under the influence of alcohol or possession or use of alcoholic beverages at stated times and places or by a particular class of persons.

(c) This section does not make intoxication or incapacitation as defined in ~~18 V.S.A. § 9142~~ 18 V.S.A. § 4802 an excuse or defense for any criminal act. Nothing contained herein shall change current law relative to insanity as a defense for any criminal act.

(d) This section does not relieve any person from civil liability for any injury to persons or property caused by that person while intoxicated or incapacitated.

Sec. 13. 13 V.S.A. § 7602 is amended to read:

§ 7602. EXPUNGEMENT AND SEALING OF RECORD,  
POSTCONVICTION; PROCEDURE

\* \* \*

(b)(1) The court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be expunged pursuant to section 7606 of this title if the following conditions are met:

\* \* \*

(C) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court ~~has~~ have been paid in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.

\* \* \*

(c)(1) The court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be expunged pursuant to section 7606 of this title if the following conditions are met:

\* \* \*

(D) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court for any crime of which the person has been convicted has been paid in full, provided that

payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.

\* \* \*

(d) For petitions filed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1)(B) of this section, unless the court finds that expungement would not be in the interests of justice, the court shall grant the petition and order that the criminal history record be expunged in accordance with section 7606 of this title if the following conditions are met:

\* \* \*

(2) Any restitution and surcharges ordered by the court ~~has~~ have been paid in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.

\* \* \*

Sec. 14. 13 V.S.A. § 7609 is amended to read:

§ 7609. EXPUNGEMENT OF CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS OF AN  
INDIVIDUAL 18–21 YEARS OF AGE

(a) Procedure. Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, the record of the criminal proceedings for an individual who was 18–21 years of age at the time the individual committed a qualifying crime shall be expunged within 30 days after the date on which the individual successfully completed the terms and conditions of the sentence for the conviction of the qualifying crime, absent a finding of good cause by the court. The court shall issue an

order to expunge all records and files related to the arrest, citation, investigation, charge, adjudication of guilt, criminal proceedings, and probation related to the sentence. A copy of the order shall be sent to each agency, department, or official named in the order. Thereafter, the court, law enforcement officers, agencies, and departments shall reply to any request for information that no record exists with respect to such individual.

Notwithstanding this subsection, the record shall not be expunged until restitution ~~has~~ and surcharges have been paid in full, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to section 7282 of this title.

\* \* \*

Sec. 15. 14 V.S.A. § 107 is amended to read:

§ 107. ALLOWANCE OF WILL; CUSTODY OF PROPERTY

(a) If consents are filed by all the heirs at law and surviving spouse, a will may be allowed without hearing. If consents are not obtained, the court shall schedule a hearing and notice shall be given as provided by the Rules of Probate Procedure.

(b) Objections to allowance of the will must be filed in writing not less than seven days prior to the hearing. In the event that no timely objections are filed, ~~the will may be allowed without hearing if it meets criteria set out in section 108 of this title~~ the court may:

(1) allow the will on the testimony of only one of the subscribing witnesses if the witness testifies that the will was executed as provided in chapter 1 of this title; or

(2) allow the will without hearing if it meets criteria set out in section 108 of this title.

\* \* \*

Sec. 16. 14 V.S.A. § 1203 is amended to read:

§ 1203. LIMITATIONS ON PRESENTATION OF CLAIMS

\* \* \*

(c) Nothing in this section affects or prevents:

(1) any proceeding to enforce any mortgage, pledge, or other lien upon property of the estate; ~~or~~

(2) to the limits of the insurance protection only, any proceeding to establish liability of the decedent or the executor or administrator for which he or she is protected by liability insurance; or

(3) the enforcement of any tax liability.

Sec. 17. 14 V.S.A. § 2643 is amended to read:

§ 2643. RELEASE BY COURT AND PARENT ON BEHALF OF MINOR

(a) The Superior judge of the Superior Court within and for the county where the minor resides, on behalf of a minor, must approve of and consent to a release to be executed by a parent in the settlement of any claim that does not exceed the sum of ~~\$1,500.00~~ \$10,000.00. A release so furnished shall be

binding on the minor and both parents, their heirs, executors, administrators, or assigns, respectively.

(b) Any claim settled for a sum in excess of ~~\$1,500.00~~ \$10,000.00 shall require the approval of a court-appointed guardian.

Sec. 18. 15 V.S.A. § 663 is amended to read:

§ 663. SUPPORT ORDERS; REQUIRED CONTENTS

\* \* \*

(c) Every order for child support made or modified under this chapter on or after July 1, 1990, shall:

(1) include an order for immediate wage withholding or, if not subject to immediate wage withholding, include a statement that wage withholding will take effect under the expedited procedure set forth in section 782 of this title;

(2) require payments to be made to the Registry in the Office of Child Support unless subject to an exception under 33 V.S.A. § 4103;

(3) require that every party to the order must notify the Registry in writing of their current mailing address and current residence address and of any change in either address within seven business days of the change, until all obligations to pay support or support arrearages or to provide for visitation are satisfied;

(4) include in bold letters notification of remedies available under section 798 of this title; and



(5) include in bold letters notification that the parent may seek a modification of his or her support obligation if there has been a showing of a real, substantial, and unanticipated change of circumstances.

\* \* \*

Sec. 19. 15 V.S.A. § 664 is amended to read:

§ 664. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

(1) “Parental rights and responsibilities” means the rights and responsibilities related to a child’s physical living arrangements, ~~parent-child contact~~, education, medical and dental care, religion, travel, and any other matter involving a child’s welfare and upbringing.

\* \* \*

Sec. 20. 18 V.S.A. § 7510 is amended to read:

§ 7510. PRELIMINARY HEARING

(a) Within five days after a person is admitted to a designated hospital for emergency examination, he or she may request the ~~Criminal Division of the~~ Superior Court to conduct a preliminary hearing to determine whether there is probable cause to believe that he or she was a person in need of treatment at the time of his or her admission.

\* \* \*

Sec. 21. 32 V.S.A. § 1434 is amended to read:

§ 1434. PROBATE CASES

(a) The following entry fees shall be paid to the Probate Division of the Superior Court for the benefit of the State, except for subdivisions (18) and (19) of this subsection, which shall be for the benefit of the county in which the fee was collected:

\* \* \*

~~(28) Petitions for minor settlement pursuant to 14 V.S.A. § 2643 - \$90.00~~

[Repealed.]

\* \* \*

Sec. 22. 33 V.S.A. § 5117 is amended to read:

§ 5117. RECORDS OF JUVENILE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS

\* \* \*

(b)(1) Notwithstanding the foregoing, inspection of such records and files by the following is not prohibited:

\* \* \*

(D) court personnel, the State's Attorney or other prosecutor authorized to prosecute criminal or juvenile cases under State law, the child's guardian ad litem, the attorneys for the parties, probation officers, and law enforcement officers who are actively participating in criminal or juvenile proceedings involving the child;

(E) the child who is the subject of the proceeding, the child's parents, guardian, and custodian, ~~and guardian ad litem~~ may inspect such records and files upon approval of the Family Court judge;

\* \* \*

Sec. 23. 33 V.S.A. § 5119 is amended to read:

§ 5119. SEALING OF RECORDS

\* \* \*

(m) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, a criminal record may not be sealed if restitution and surcharges are owed, provided that payment of surcharges shall not be required if the surcharges have been waived by the court pursuant to 13 V.S.A. § 7282.

Sec. 24. REPEAL

12 V.S.A. chapter 215, subchapter 1 (voluntary arbitration for medical malpractice cases) is repealed.

Sec. 25. PERSONS WITH SUSPENDED DRIVER'S LICENSES;

REINSTATEMENT FEE WAIVER PROGRAM

(a) There is established the Reinstatement Fee Waiver Program to permit the Department of Motor Vehicles to waive all license reinstatement fees for motor vehicle operators whose licenses have been suspended under certain circumstances. The Reinstatement Fee Waiver Program shall comply with the guidelines set forth in this section.

(b) On or before April 30, 2021, the Department of Motor Vehicles shall:

(1) waive all license reinstatement fees for any person whose operator's license has been:

(A) suspended for noncriminal reasons for one year or longer and who has satisfied all other reinstatement conditions and requirements; or

(B) suspended prior to July 1, 2014 for failure to pay the amount due in a Judicial Bureau judgment and who has satisfied all other reinstatement conditions and requirements;

(2) reinstate the operator's licenses of each person whose reinstatement fees are waived pursuant to subdivision (b)(1) of this section; and

(3) notify each person whose reinstatement fees are waived pursuant to subdivision (b)(1) of this section that the person's license has been reinstated or that the person's license is ineligible for reinstatement and the reason for ineligibility.

(c) As used in this section:

(1) "Amount due" means the same as in 4 V.S.A. § 1109(a).

(2) "Reinstatement conditions and requirements" shall not include the amount due in a Judicial Bureau judgment.

(3) "Suspended for noncriminal reasons" shall not include a license that is under suspension on April 30, 2021 for the accumulation of 10 or more points.

Sec. 26. CONFORMING REVISIONS; “MARIJUANA” AND  
“CANNABIS”

When preparing the Vermont Statutes Annotated for publication, the Office of Legislative Council shall replace “marijuana” with “cannabis” throughout the statutes as needed for consistency with this act, provided the revisions have no other effect on the meaning of the affected statutes.

Sec. 27. 4 V.S.A. § 33 is amended to read:

§ 33. JURISDICTION; FAMILY DIVISION

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the Family Division shall have exclusive jurisdiction to hear and dispose of the following proceedings filed or pending on or after October 1, 1990:

\* \* \*

(18) Concurrent with the Probate Division, special immigration judicial determinations regarding the custody and care of children within the meaning of the federal Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(27)(J) and 8 C.F.R. § 204.11) issued pursuant to 14 V.S.A. chapter 111, subchapter 14.

\* \* \*

Sec. 28. 4 V.S.A. § 35 is amended to read:

§ 35. JURISDICTION; PROBATE DIVISION

The Probate Division shall have jurisdiction of:

\* \* \*

(25) grandparent visitation proceedings under 15 V.S.A. chapter 18; ~~and~~

(26) other matters as provided by law; and

(27) concurrent with the Family Division, special immigration judicial determinations regarding the custody and care of children within the meaning of the federal Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(27)(J) and 8 C.F.R. § 204.11) issued pursuant to 14 V.S.A. chapter 111, subchapter 14.

Sec. 29. 14 V.S.A. chapter 111, subchapter 14 is added to read:

Subchapter 14. Special Immigration Status

§ 3098. SPECIAL IMMIGRATION JUVENILE STATUS; JURISDICTION  
AND FINDINGS

(a) The court has jurisdiction under Vermont law to make judicial determinations regarding the custody and care of children within the meaning of the federal Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(27)(J) and 8 C.F.R. § 204.11). The court is authorized to make the findings necessary to enable a child to petition the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service for classification as a special immigrant juvenile pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(27)(J).

(b)(1) If an order is requested from the court making the necessary findings regarding special immigrant juvenile status as described in subsection (a) of this section, the court shall issue an order if there is evidence to support those findings, which may include a declaration by the child who is the subject of the petition. The order issued by the court shall include all of the following findings:

(A) The child was either of the following:

(i) Declared a dependent of the court.

(ii) Legally committed to or placed under the custody of a State agency or department or an individual or entity appointed by the court. The court shall indicate the date on which the dependency, commitment, or custody was ordered.

(B) That reunification of the child with one or both of the child's parents was determined not to be viable because of abuse, neglect, abandonment, or a similar basis pursuant to Vermont law. The court shall indicate the date on which reunification was determined not to be viable.

(C) That it is not in the best interests of the child to be returned to the child's or his or her parent's previous country of nationality or country of last habitual residence.

(2) If requested by a party, the court may make additional findings that are supported by evidence.

(c) In any judicial proceedings in response to a request that the court make the findings necessary to support a petition for classification as a special immigrant juvenile, information regarding the child's immigration status that is not otherwise protected by State laws shall remain confidential. This information shall also be exempt from public inspection and copying under the Public Records Act and shall be kept confidential, except that the information shall be available for inspection by the court, the child who is the subject of the

proceeding, the parties, the attorneys for the parties, the child’s counsel, and the child’s guardian.

(d) As used in this section, “court” means the Probate Division and the Family Division of the Superior Court.

Sec. 30. 13 V.S.A. § 2821 is amended to read:

§ 2821. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

\* \* \*

(3) “Performance” means:

(A) an event that is photographed, filmed, or visually recorded; or

(B) a play, dance, or other visual presentation or exhibition before an audience.

\* \* \*

Sec. 31. EXPUNGEMENT OF MARIJUANA CRIMINAL HISTORY  
RECORDS

(a) As used in this section:

(1) “Court” means the Criminal Division of the Superior Court.

(2) “Criminal history record” means all information documenting an individual’s contact with the criminal justice system, including data regarding identification, arrest or citation, arraignment, judicial disposition, custody, and supervision.



(b) The court shall order the expungement of criminal history records of violations of 18 V.S.A. § 4230(a)(1) that occurred prior to January 1, 2021. The process for expunging these records shall be completed by the court and all entities subject to the order not later than January 1, 2022.

(c) Upon entry of an expungement order, the order shall be legally effective immediately and the person whose record is expunged shall be treated in all respects as if he or she had never been arrested, convicted, or sentenced for the offense. The court shall issue an order to expunge all records and files related to the arrest, citation, investigation, charge, adjudication of guilt, criminal proceedings, and probation related to the sentence. The court shall issue the person a certificate stating that the offense for which the person was convicted has been decriminalized and therefore warrants issuance of the order and that its effect is to annul the record of arrest, conviction, and sentence. The court shall provide notice of the expungement to the person who is the subject of the record at the person's last known address, the Vermont Crime Information Center (VCIC), the arresting agency, and any other entity that may have a record related to the order to expunge. The VCIC shall provide notice of the expungement to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center.

(d) On and after January 1, 2021, a person who was arrested or convicted of a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4230(a)(1) prior to such date:

(1) shall not be required to acknowledge the existence of such a criminal history record or answer questions about the record in any application for employment, license, or civil right or privilege or in an appearance as a witness in any proceeding or hearing;

(2) may deny the existence of the record regardless of whether the person has received notice from the court that an expungement order has been issued on the person's behalf; and

(3) may utilize the procedures in chapter 230 of Title 13 to seek expungement or sealing of the record prior to the court taking steps to issue an expungement order pursuant to this section.

(e) Nothing in this section shall affect any right of the person whose record has been expunged to rely on it as a bar to any subsequent proceedings for the same offense.

(f)(1) The court shall keep a special index of cases that have been expunged together with the expungement order and the certificate issued pursuant to this chapter. The index shall list only the name of the person convicted of the offense, his or her date of birth, the docket number, and the criminal offense that was the subject of the expungement.

(2) The special index and related documents specified in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be confidential and shall be physically and electronically segregated in a manner that ensures confidentiality and that limits access to authorized persons.

(3) Inspection of the expungement order and the certificate may be permitted only upon petition by the person who is the subject of the case. The Chief Superior Judge may permit special access to the index and the documents for research purposes pursuant to the rules for public access to court records.

(4) All other court documents in a case that are subject to an expungement order shall be destroyed.

(5) The court shall follow policies adopted pursuant to 13 V.S.A. § 7606 in implementing this section.

(g) Upon receiving an inquiry from any person regarding an expunged record, an entity shall respond that “NO RECORD EXISTS.”

Sec. 32. 18 V.S.A. § 4230 is amended to read:

§ 4230. MARIJUANA

(a) Possession and cultivation.

~~(1)(A)~~ No person shall knowingly and unlawfully possess more than one ounce of marijuana or more than five grams of hashish or cultivate more than two mature marijuana plants or four immature marijuana plants. A person who violates this subdivision shall be assessed a civil penalty as follows:

(A) not more than \$100.00 for a first offense;

(B) not more than \$200.00 for a second offense; and

(C) not more than \$500.00 for a third or subsequent offense.

(2)(A) No person shall knowingly and unlawfully possess two ounces or more of marijuana or ten grams or more of hashish or more than three mature marijuana plants or six immature marijuana plants. For a first offense under this subdivision ~~(A)(2)~~, a person shall be provided the opportunity to participate in the Court Diversion Program unless the prosecutor states on the record why a referral to the Court Diversion Program would not serve the ends of justice. A person convicted of a first offense under this subdivision shall be imprisoned not more than six months or fined not more than \$500.00, or both.

(B) A person convicted of a second or subsequent offense of ~~knowingly and unlawfully possessing more than one ounce of marijuana or more than five grams of hashish or cultivating more than two mature marijuana plants or four immature marijuana plants~~ violating subdivision (a)(2)(A) of this section shall be imprisoned not more than two years or fined not more than \$2,000.00, or both.

(C) Upon an adjudication of guilt for a first or second offense under this subdivision, the court may defer sentencing as provided in 13 V.S.A. § 7041, except that the court may in its discretion defer sentence without the filing of a presentence investigation report and except that sentence may be imposed at any time within two years from and after the date of entry of deferment. The court may, prior to sentencing, order that the defendant submit to a drug assessment screening, which may be considered at sentencing in the same manner as a presentence report.

~~(2)~~(3) A person knowingly and unlawfully possessing ~~two~~ eight ounces of marijuana or ~~40 grams~~ 1.4 ounces of hashish or knowingly and unlawfully cultivating more than four mature marijuana plants or eight immature marijuana plants shall be imprisoned not more than three years or fined not more than \$10,000.00, or both.

~~(3)~~(4) A person knowingly and unlawfully possessing more than one pound of marijuana or more than 2.8 ounces of hashish or knowingly and unlawfully cultivating more than six mature marijuana plants or 12 immature marijuana plants shall be imprisoned not more than five years or fined not more than \$10,000.00, or both.

~~(4)~~(5) A person knowingly and unlawfully possessing more than 10 pounds of marijuana or more than one pound of hashish or knowingly and unlawfully cultivating more than 12 mature marijuana plants or 24 immature marijuana plants shall be imprisoned not more than 15 years or fined not more than \$500,000.00, or both.

~~(5)~~(6) If a court fails to provide the defendant with notice of collateral consequences in accordance with 13 V.S.A. § 8005(b) and the defendant later at any time shows that the plea and conviction for a violation of this subsection may have or has had a negative consequence, the court, upon the defendant's motion, shall vacate the judgment and permit the defendant to withdraw the plea or admission and enter a plea of not guilty. Failure of the court to advise

the defendant of a particular collateral consequence shall not support a motion to vacate.

~~(6)~~(7) The amounts of marijuana in this subsection shall not include marijuana cultivated, harvested, and stored in accordance with section 4230e of this title.

\* \* \*

Sec. 33. 13 V.S.A. § 7601 is amended to read:

§ 7601. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

\* \* \*

(4) “Qualifying crime” means:

\* \* \*

(G) a violation of 18 V.S.A. § 4230(a) related to possession and cultivation of marijuana;

\* \* \*

Sec. 34. EFFECTIVE DATES

This act shall take effect on passage, except that Sec. 32 (marijuana penalties) shall take effect on January 1, 2021.

Date Governor signed bill: October 7, 2020